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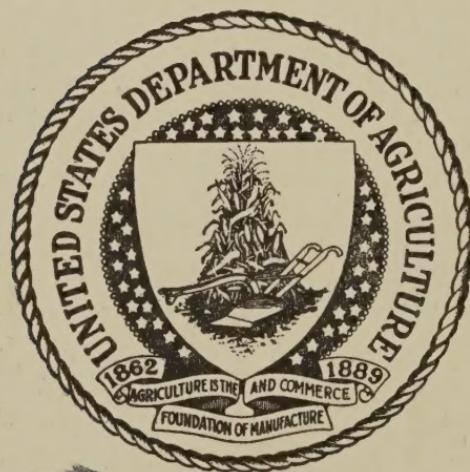
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# COLD FACTS;

How Members of  
**FROZEN FOOD LOCKER CO-OPS**  
**CAN EAT BETTER FOR LESS**

U. S. Department  
of Agriculture

2 **U.S. Rural Electrification  
Administration**

## FOOD FOR THOUGHT

How would you like to eat better food for less money? You can by taking full advantage of your co-op locker plant.

This booklet lists many of the ways in which you can get maximum benefits from your frozen-food plant. Also it tells how to supplement locker plant services with your own home freezer if you have one.

Your co-op locker plant offers services which you as an individual cannot duplicate. By utilizing them to the fullest, you will gain more and more—besides having a choice of food for your table 12 months in the year. See your locker plant manager and discuss your needs with him. Let him show you how you can eat better for less!

CLAUDE R. WICKARD,  
*Administrator.*



**F**ROZEN FOOD locker plants have come more and more to the forefront during recent years. There are more than 12,000 of them in the United States today, some situated in the cities and others in rural areas. Everywhere they have made it possible for people to enjoy better food at less cost, but in rural sections the benefits have been most noticeable.

Since freezer-plant storage service was first offered over 40 years ago, the rental of lockers has been the principal function of this community institution. However, the service has expanded and improved amazingly since 1908, when farmers first rented space to store boxes of meat in the upstairs cold storage section of an ice house at Chico, Calif.

Within the last two decades, this crude ice house storage service has been transformed into modern frozen-food lockers. Today, clean, neat individual metal storage drawers are provided by locker plants. It is the economical, convenient method by which farm and city people alike may keep a year-round supply of fresh, wholesome food.

Your co-op locker plant belongs to you and your neighbors. It was set up on a nonprofit basis to serve you at cost, and that is the way it operates. Your plant is one of 45 in the United States financed by loans from the Rural Electrification Administration, the Federal agency which helped bring electricity to rural America. A frozen-food locker was needed in your community, and that is why REA lent funds to help it get started.

The service rates and charges are as reasonable as efficient operation can make them. If they result in more revenue to the co-op than the actual cost of service, the difference is credited to the members in proportion to their patronage, as their growing personal equity in their co-op locker plant. As the REA loan is paid back out of revenue, the patron-members will eventually own the plant free and clear of all indebtedness. The more members the co-op has, and the more use they make of it, the cheaper will be the unit cost of operation. This means that, as a member, it is in your interest to make use of your co-op locker plant services in

every way possible. The more you use it, the greater will be the benefits you will get from it.

The plant exists to serve you. It can be your principal food supply center, whether you produce your own food or not. Regardless of whether you want to store a bushel of peas or a 1,000-pound steer, your plant can handle it for you—preparing it for storage either in your locker at the plant or in your home freezer unit.

There are other services which your plant offers you also, and this booklet is intended to tell you about them, thereby enabling you to obtain maximum benefits from your membership in your frozen-food locker co-op. By studying it carefully, you will see how you can save time and money.

If you are a producer of food products, the locker plant will prepare and preserve your products whether meat, fruit, or vegetables. In most cases, all you need do is notify your locker plant manager when you have something ready, and he will do the rest. Your food is then ready to take from your locker whenever you wish. You are relieved of the slaughtering or the canning at home. Freezing is so easy!

If you are a nonproducer of food products, you may still take advantage of the savings available at your locker plant. The plant manager is constantly in touch with other patrons and the markets and will buy for you in wholesale quantities. All you have to do is tell him your needs. He will buy for you at the best possible price; then he will prepare it and place it in your locker, ready for you to pick up.

Your locker plant manager will obtain for you a quarter or half of beef, a half hog, a lamb or fish, a case of strawberries, a bushel of peaches, a hamper of beans or peas, sweet corn, or anything *you* like to eat. When you are a locker plant patron, your food knows no season—you can eat what you want when you want it. Your plant manager makes his own weather and season; he is a good man to know.

Freezing is the best method of retaining freshness over a period of time. In most cases, if the

food is *properly processed*, it is hard to distinguish a frozen product from a fresh one. Freezing arrests all deteriorating action in the food and delivers it to your table as fresh as when processed.

If you own a zero home storage unit, the locker plant can be of great assistance to you. If you are going to realize the full benefits and savings possible from your unit, ask your locker plant manager to help plan a program of food buying and storing. Your home unit is not a replacement for your locker plant but a good supplement. It offers great savings and convenience if properly used. Your greatest savings are realized when food is stored in quantity for future use, and no one is better qualified than your locker plant manager to advise on what to store and when. He will take all the fuss and muss off your hands and keep your unit full of choice foods at all times.

You need not rent a locker at the plant to take advantage of the service and savings. Most people find it very handy to have a locker to use as a master storage for their home unit but it is not necessary.

If you like, you can have food bought, processed, and quick-frozen for you, and then you may transfer it immediately to your home freezer. In short, you may avail yourself of any of the services of the locker plant as you see fit.

## **Fresh Meat All Year**

Butchering day, when the whole family worked from dawn to dusk, scalding, scraping, cutting, rendering lard, and stuffing sausages—that was a great day! The kids had bladder footballs. The dogs stuffed themselves. Junior had to be sent away for the day so he would not know it was his pet pig. It was exciting, but Mom worked herself dizzy trying to heat enough hot water on the wood-burning cook stove. Grease smoke covered the house, and the whole family went to bed dead tired.

Now, butchering day is as obsolete as the horse and buggy. Farmers no longer need spend the

greater part of a day chasing down and slaughtering a pig or a calf under uncertain conditions. REA-financed co-op frozen-food locker plants have the know-how and facilities for relieving them of this time-consuming chore.

Locker-plant slaughtering provides several advantages:

1. It is cheaper. The average farmer can net more by performing some other chore he can do better, while the locker plant does his slaughtering.
2. It can be done safely any time of the year. The locker plant makes its own weather.
3. By being able to have his meat animals slaughtered any time of year, the farmer can save on food.
4. The farmer can have his choice of meat whenever he wants it. For example, he can have pork any time of year, even in summer time.
5. The locker plant is equipped to handle steers and other large animals.
6. The staff is expert at skinning carcasses, which insures a good hide.
7. The locker plant will accept the hide as full payment for slaughtering, or it will purchase the hide.
8. The plant has the facilities for proper preservation and storage.

To insure top-quality meat, a carcass needs refrigeration within 30 minutes after slaughtering. Then it must be kept at an even temperature just above freezing.

## **Spoilage Eliminated**

Some farmers find outdoor chilling at home during the late fall and winter satisfactory, if the weather is just right. But usually the temperature is irregular, resulting in uneven chilling. If the mercury goes too low, overchilling results and the meat dries out excessively. Or if the temperature rises, spoilage results.

For example, if pork is not brought down to a maximum of  $38^{\circ}$  at the bone in the ham within 24 hours, the ham probably will sour in curing.



*And this 38° temperature has to be reached without freezing any part of the carcass.*

Your co-op locker plant provides a precision chilling service which gives exactly the desired temperature when you need it. Chilling draws out the body heat, thus preventing the souring or spoilage which are such real threats to the person unequipped for the job. Then the meat is aged to improve its flavor and make it more tender.

Your co-op locker plant staff cuts the carcass into the standard selections—hams, shoulders, ribs, loin, chops, steaks, and roasts. Roasts are cut to order into convenient family-sized units. If desired, the bone may be taken out to make wrapping easier. This also saves locker space and simplifies carving and serving.

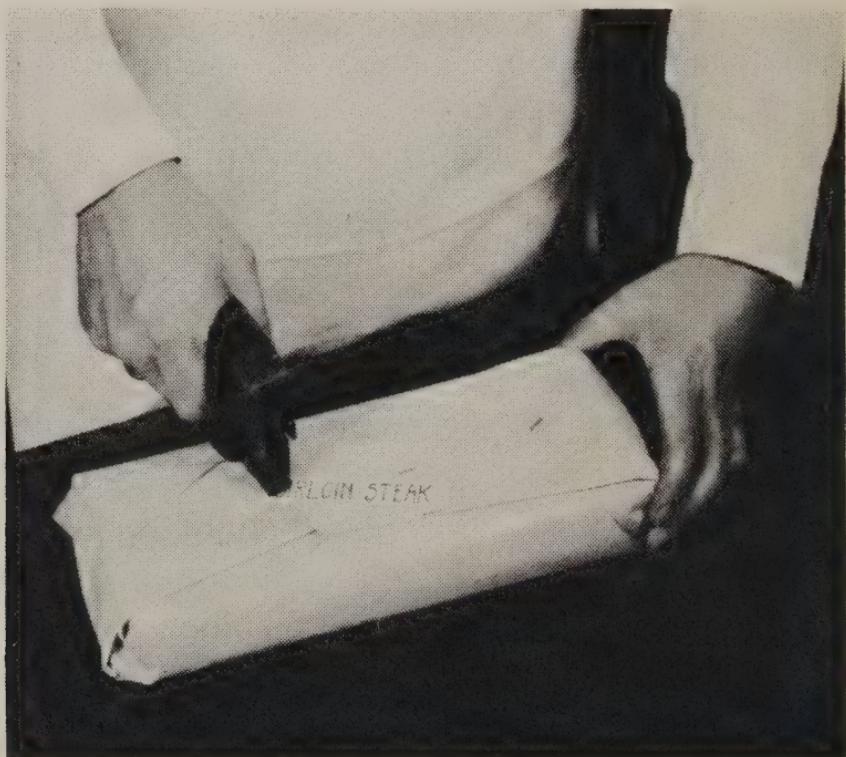
All cuts are neatly trimmed to further conserve locker space. The lean trimmings of pork may be



uniformly seasoned and ground into delicious sausage; the fat trimmings may be rendered into lard. Beef trimmings and some of the tougher cuts may be ground into hamburger. Cutting, grinding, and other processing services are available at a nominal rate.

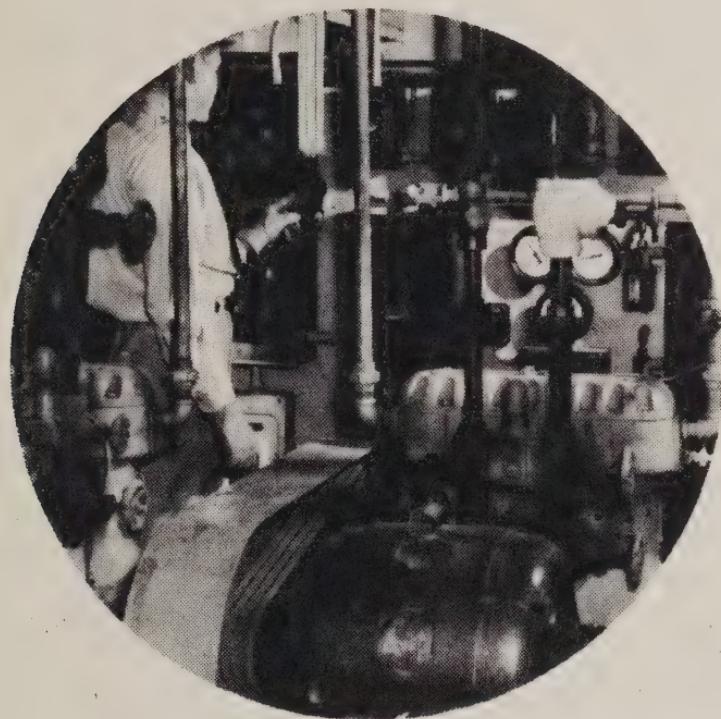
You tell your plant manager the size servings you wish, number of pounds in the roasts, thickness of the steaks and chops, etc., and he will cut them to fit your special needs.

Although wrapping may seem like a simple operation, it is actually a very important step.



Unless meats are properly wrapped in moisture-proof wrapping, the product will dry out and lose its freshness and natural flavor. Contrary to general belief, wax paper is not vapor proof and will not protect food long. Therefore, your co-op locker plant uses a moisture-vapor-proof wrap which keeps out the air and holds in the moisture.

Meats are wrapped promptly after chilling and aging to assure the best possible product for the patron. The family-meal-unit packages are then labeled and dated for the convenience of members so that selection may be made quickly when taken from the locker.



The locked-in flavor and freshness of frozen foods is achieved in a locker plant by subjecting products to subzero temperatures that hold foods just as they are until thawed out for cooking. Your locker plant has an accurately controlled, subzero temperature room especially designed and adapted to quickly lower the temperature of products as far down as 20° below zero. This seals in the natural flavor, freshness, and quality. The capacity of the locker plant quick freezer is great enough to freeze large quantities uniformly, thus creating a much better product for your table.

Foods quick-frozen at the locker plant keep longer and taste better, whether stored at the plant or in a home unit.

## Your Cold Watchdog

Dual compressors which insure uninterrupted service, and the almost perfect insulation of the locker room at the co-op locker plant, maintain low temperatures constantly. Special devices enable the plant manager to control the temperature and humidity. This kind of protection prevents shrinkage and molds, spoilage, and other bacterial action. It also safeguards the flavor and quality of frozen foods. Because the quality of frozen foods is impaired by changing temperatures, the temperature within the lockers is never permitted to vary more than a few degrees. The accompanying picture shows the dual compressors. Only one compressor is operated at a time. However, should either fail or need repair, the other is put into operation. This insures uninterrupted service.

If your home unit should break down, call your locker plant manager at once—he will make arrangements to store your food until it can be repaired.



## Precision Curing

Another service offered by your co-op locker plant is the curing and smoking of pork. Experienced workers carefully inspect the meat to be cured and make recommendations as to the type of cure to use for best results. They weigh the curing ingredients to make sure the proper amount is used for each piece of meat for proper curing. To assure thorough curing, the workers see to it

that the curing elements completely permeate the product.

Smoking is done under ideal conditions created by the plant. Both the temperature and the amount of smoke are carefully controlled so that products turn out according to the individual preferences of the patrons. Hickory, oak, or pecan is used in creating the curative smoke. Artificial liquid smoke also is available for those who prefer it.

In addition to hams, shoulders, and sides of bacon, your plant also smokes pork loin, jowls, beef tongue, turkeys, and cheese.

If you desire only an occasional country-cured ham, loin, etc., they are available at the plant the year around.

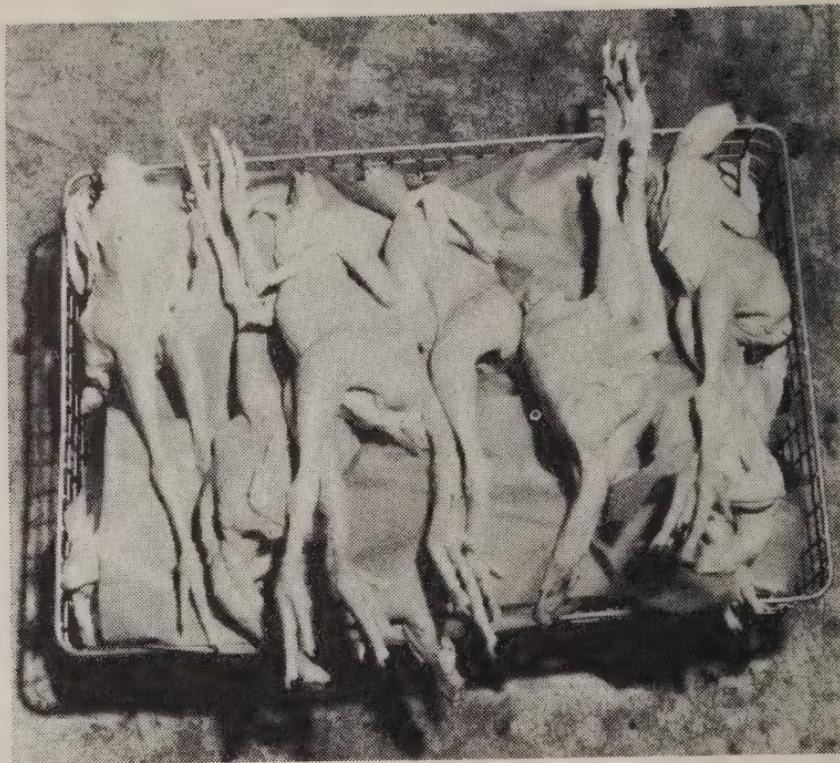
## **Clean White Lard**

Anyone can make lard. Just render the pork fat and let it cool—many people think that is all there is to it. But good lard is the result of 100-percent good, clean fat, processed under carefully controlled conditions! The locker plant renders the fat under controlled temperature conditions which reduce the water content to less than 4 percent. Most plants use automatic equipment that eliminates the possibility of burned or tainted lard. After the cooking, the lard is carefully strained and the solid matter is pressed under enormous pressure. This produces the maximum amount of lard and leaves good cracklings for the best corn bread or for dog food.

Locker plant lard rendering is doubly beneficial. It encourages closer trimming of pork, which saves locker space, and it provides extra fat for rendering.

## **Frozen Chickens Don't Eat**

Some farmers kill their chickens one at a time for the dinner table, and feed the others from week to week—and what a feed bill! Other farmers figure out quarterly budgets of broilers, fryers, and baking hens, and have them killed, dressed, frozen, and



stored in their lockers for a few cents each, thus being able to eat the desired size and quality the year around.

Co-op locker plants are equipped to kill and dress poultry quickly and efficiently. There is plenty of hot water for picking with mechanical fingers; and the water is kept at the right temperature so that the skin and muscles are not torn during the process. After picking and dressing it, the workers in your locker plant place the poultry in ice water for an hour to assure the best flavor. Then it is re-cleaned, wrapped, labeled, dated, and frozen. These services are provided for patrons and for stores.

If you do not raise your own poultry, see your locker plant manager. He will buy and process for you any size and amount you need.

Most REA-financed co-op lockers are equipped to process fruits and vegetables in bulk quantities—bushels, barrels, or carload lots—for freezer storage.

Because the quality of fruits and vegetables declines rapidly, if they are not properly handled, locker plant managers recommend that such produce be brought to the plant immediately after harvesting.

While the plants are not staffed to handle small quantities of fruits and vegetables, they do sell containers and packing supplies. Also, the managers give advice on the harvesting and preparation of these products for freezer storage and have

printed instructions for you to take home to use as a ready reference.

Having prepared their own fruits and vegetables for storage, patrons may bring them to the plant for sharp-freezing and storage in their lockers. June strawberry shortcake in January; that is what locker plant service means!

## **Varied Services Offered**

With the introduction of home freezers, the co-op locker plants expanded their operations to provide a supplementary service for these home units. Locker plants slaughter, chill, age, wrap, label, date, and sharp-freeze products for owners of home freezers. Also, they provide supplementary storage space for the owners of such units.

Few farmers have space in their home units for a whole beef carcass and a porker at the same time. So they rent a locker and store most of their meats at the locker plant, keeping home only a few weeks' supply at a time.

Properly frozen products are not endangered by spoilage while being carried in an ordinary container from the locker plant to the home freezer, if the trip takes no more than 45 minutes. However, for longer intervals, locker plant managers recommend that a carrying box or bag be used. These can be made cheaply at home or purchased at a nominal price.

The combination of a home unit and a locker in a frozen-food plant adds up to the ultimate in food service. The locker plant to supply the food, if you do not produce your own, and process it ready to store, and the home unit for added convenience! The most common practice is to rely on the plant to supply the food and store the bulk of it, you making only weekly or semimonthly trips to the plant for a supply to store at home in the home unit.

## **Consult Your Manager**

The manager of the co-op locker plant is ready to advise you on raising and processing fruits and

vegetables for locker storage, as well as on making the most efficient use of lockers.

Customers and noncustomers alike, may obtain information about planning an annual family food budget, selecting varieties of fruits and vegetables that freeze and keep best, determining the proper time to harvest, and preparing products for locker storage. Also, the manager will show a patron how to package products so that they will retain their natural flavor, how to place them in the locker to insure proper circulation of air among the stored items, and he will explain how long it is advisable to keep various products in storage, and how to use home freezing units in conjunction with the locker plant.

The frozen food industry has progressed in leaps and bounds in recent years, and some economists predict that within 10 years 65 percent of the food we consume may be frozen.

Your plant manager offers many services, too numerous to mention here, that he will be glad to discuss with you. Let him help with your food problems.

## **Service At Cost**

Your REA-financed co-op locker plant is a community producer-to-consumer medium that eliminates such costs as stock-buyers' commissions, brokerage and warehouse commissions, transportation charges to processing centers, transportation to retailers, and retailers' profits.

The locker plant also makes it possible for the farmer to produce and preserve a larger part of his family's year-round food supply. It is no longer necessary for him to feed animals until it is cold enough to kill them. He may have a pig or a steer slaughtered at the locker plant in July as well as in December. The carcass can be processed to meet individual requirements at 20 to 40 percent savings.

Co-op plants operate on a service-at-cost basis. Therefore, if any funds remain out of receipts after these costs are met, they are credited to the members of the co-op.

**Your co-op locker plant serves a worthwhile purpose in the community and can be of real assistance to you. Come in and talk things over with your plant manager. He can save you many dollars on your food bill.**





